



QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Learners First

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March 16, 2012

Dear Judiciary Committee Members,

We are writing this letter of support for Raised Bill No. 5288, An Act Concerning Children of Incarcerated Women. The STRIDE Program, supported through the CT Department of Labor has been working with women at York Correctional Institution in Niantic since 1999. STRIDE (Skills, Transition, Respect, Integrity, Direction, Employment) is a state-funded, workforce development program that provides transitional support services, operating within the Quinebaug Valley Community College's Division of Student Services. The STRIDE Program serves a targeted group of incarcerated men and women both pre and post-release at Bridgeport Correctional Center in Bridgeport, Niantic Annex Correctional Institution in Niantic, Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center in Uncasville, New Haven Correctional Center in New Haven, and York Correctional Institution in Niantic. The class curriculum and post-release services are collaboratively designed to assist parents in successfully reentering the workforce while resuming their parental roles. STRIDE participants have a 13%** recidivism rate compared to 47%* with no reentry program in place.

It has been our experience in working with incarcerated women at York Correctional Institution (YCI) that being away from their children during this critical, developmental stage, mothers have demonstrated a significant sense of loss, reduced self-efficacy, remorse, loneliness, guilt, regret and abandonment. Compounded with the loss of not being with their children on a daily basis, their overall wellbeing is tremendously affected. Wendy, a current STRIDE graduate who gave birth to a baby girl while incarcerated at YCI has stated, "The institution was not family friendly and I was not able to see my newborn on a regular basis. Upon release, I did not have a good family connection not to mention bonding with my daughter at a critical time. It was difficult when I returned home as my daughter was 17 months and it has taken me 6 months to reconnect with my daughter."

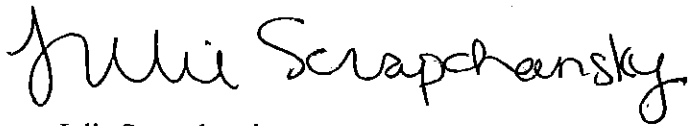
According to a report prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation titled *Children and Families with Incarcerated Parents*, "In addition to lowering the likelihood of recidivism among incarcerated parents, some evidence exists that maintaining contact with an incarcerated parent improves a child's emotional response to the incarceration and supports parent-child attachment."

<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid={E1181F44-1C8E-4E44-85EA-1C7870CD2B68}>

We truly hope that the Judiciary Committee gives careful consideration to Raised Bill No. 5288 as it will be invaluable to the mothers and their children at YCI.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Scrapchansky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Scrapchansky
STRIDE Program Director

**Based on the 2011 Annual Recidivism Report from the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy & Management Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division. **STRIDE recidivism rate based on all participating clients.*